

Encouraging Responsible Fatherhood

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 Promotes Responsible Fatherhood

Statistics on family breakdown are alarming:

- Approximately 19.4 million children do not live with their dads.

Growing up without a father is a strong predictor of child poverty:

- Children growing up without two parents are more likely to drop out of school, use drugs, commit crimes, live in poverty, commit suicide, and have children outside of marriage.

To encourage fathers to take a more active role in their children's lives, the *Deficit Reduction Act 2005* (P.L. 109-171) provides up to \$50 million per year for responsible fatherhood initiatives to help fathers establish positive relationships with their children and the children's mothers, to improve the job skills of low-income fathers, to help increase child support payments, to promote marriage among parents, and to enlist faith-based and community groups in the effort to provide support to fathers and families,. These initiatives will be funded through competitive grants made by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to states, territories, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and public and nonprofit community organizations (including religious organizations).

These grants support activities promoting responsible fatherhood such as

1. Counseling;
2. Mentoring;
3. Making available information about the benefits of marriage and 2-parent involvement for children;
4. Disseminating information on the causes of domestic violence and child abuse, financial planning seminars;
5. Divorce education and reduction programs, including mediation and counseling;
6. Education on good parenting practices;
7. Encouraging child support payments;
8. Fostering economic stability by helping fathers improve their economic status;
9. Implementing a national clearinghouse to assist states and communities in efforts to promote and support marriage and responsible fatherhood.